

House Hunting Guide



Introduction

Ottawa is a mid-sized city with a North American pattern of urban growth, and suburban lifestyles. Some closer-in neighborhoods offer older homes, ranging from late 1800's (usually small) which qualify as "heritage" homes, and larger homes from the 1920s to 40s. As can be expected, there are homes of all types, single family, duplex, town homes, condos, apartment buildings. You can find a rural farm, a downtown loft, a cottage on the river, or a limestone manor...as long as it's within your Living Quarters Allowance and the housing regulations (see Housing Handbook, U.S. Mission Housing Policy and Standards, March 2010).

Finding Your Own Can Be Very Rewarding

Although it may seem difficult to quickly familiarize oneself with a new city, select a neighborhood, look at houses, and commit to a lease in the first weeks, Ottawa is not a large city, so familiarization with neighborhoods is not a problem here. And, if you've lived in assigned government housing for a few years, it's rewarding to select housing which suits your tastes - all the walls may not even be white nor the carpets beige!

Most people find very satisfactory housing within their housing allowances. Do note that local custom is to increase the rent 5% per year automatically; check for the clause in rental agreements and negotiate this if needed or after two or three years you could find yourself significantly "out of pocket"! Most people find their allowance covers utilities with no problem; firewood and some rental furniture may also be covered.

REMEMBER: To insure conformance to all applicable standards, prior to leasing or purchasing a home, the proposed lease or purchase contract and Residential Space Measurement Form must be reviewed and approved by GSO. Additionally, a Post Residential Security Survey must also be by RSO in advance of a lease or purchase. See Post Housing Handbook for details.

Seasons for House-Hunting

As is common in most markets, the summer months are busy transfer seasons, so people who do their house hunting in June through early August have the greatest number of choices. It's not impossible to find a place later, but choices are more limited. The number of houses available once the snow starts, however, drops off dramatically and doesn't pick up again until spring (read: May, not March.) Apartment hunters will find a less volatile situation, but it is to a

lesser degree subject to the same seasonal swings in numbers of available units. If you are in the United States, you may want to make a reconnaissance trip before your arrival date to select housing, especially if your arrival is scheduled for late summer or autumn.

The residence hotels in which most non-DoD personnel are accommodated while they find permanent housing (Marriott Residence, Les Suites, etc.) are fine. Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA) is intended to cover up to 90 days after arrival at post.

Schools

If you have or will have school-age children, be sure to read the *2010 Education Report* and the information submitted by Beatrice Cameron, Regional Education Officer (2010) that is included in your welcome package. These reports offer information on Ottawa schools, both public and private, which have been attended by U.S. Embassy children. Anyone with school-age children should study it carefully before making housing decisions. There are many private, public, Catholic public, French immersion schools, or "Alternative (public)" (just what it sounds like - some are more flexible, more innovative or more able to deal with learning disabilities, oriented towards gifted children, etc.) Some schools seem to reflect their neighborhood's demographics but others emphatically do not! Check it out carefully *-before you sign a residential lease*. Transportation is provided for public schools from elementary through grade 9. For private schools and high-school age students, parents must make arrangements for transportation. Check with CLO for additional details on transportation options.

The *Housing Handbook* covers a wide range of official housing regulations and procedures relating to approval of leases for U.S. Mission personnel. It is essential to review the *Housing Handbook* early in the house-hunting process. View the Post Ottawa Website on the US Department of State's Intranet Website. Click on NEWCOMERS to Canada for a complete view of Post living issues.

Ottawa's General Layout

Ottawa is a city divided by waterways and surrounded by a greenbelt (green space/park land that will not be developed). The Ottawa River forms the city's northern boundary and separates Ottawa, Ontario, from Hull, Aylmer, and Gatineau in Quebec. The Rideau River and Rideau Canal lie close together and flow generally northeast-southwest, bisecting the metropolitan area. The Greenbelt forms Ottawa's outer edge and separates Ottawa from the outlying municipalities of Gloucester, Nepean and Kanata.

About This Listing

We have grouped neighborhoods into five loose *categories*, rather than by their location. Our categories are: 1) downtown urban living 2) older, close-in residential neighborhoods 3) prestige neighborhoods 4) medium-close residential neighborhoods 5) the new communities towards the edge of the metro region.

Disclaimer! Disclaimer!

Comments are based on general impressions and opinions; you can certainly find the exception to the description in each area since, like anywhere, Ottawa's neighborhoods are not completely homogenous. Not everyone likes the same type of neighborhood nor is everyone's housing allowance the same - some of us need every square foot we're allowed plus the big hallways and unfinished basements which don't count against our square footage allowances, while others want the very best location and don't need much space. You can read between the lines in the listings to get an idea of the general price level of neighborhoods. Premier neighborhoods are almost by definition expensive; neighborhoods appealing to young families tend to be clean and safe and have all the amenities but are not be very posh. The more eclectic areas tend to be less socio-economic homogenous. Ottawa is considered to be very safe and all of the neighborhoods listed are security approved.

These are the neighborhoods which Mission families would currently live in - from senior diplomats to the most junior support staff member. We hope it makes your house-hunting easier.

Downtown, Urban Living

Ottawa's downtown is not an intense urban experience. Things are pretty quiet after 7 p.m. except in a very few areas. There are high-rises, but the general character is more that of low-rises. Centretown and Lowertown (which includes Bytown and the market) are the two urban neighborhoods you might consider.

Centretown (Otherwise known as downtown, uptown or the business district.)

Location: From Parliament Hill south to the Queensway (417), and from the Rideau Canal on the east to Bronson Street on the west.

General Character: Mixed. There are several nice high-rise type buildings and further south, there's a real mix of restored big Victorians, and new condo-type buildings and conversions. Generally, it is not a neighborhood that is great for families, and doesn't have a particularly interesting night-life, but if proximity to the Embassy is what you want, you can't get any closer. Good rental availability. The Queen Elizabeth Towers (500 Laurier Avenue W) is well-liked, with lots of amenities.

Commute to Embassy: 5-15 minute walk

Commute to Private Schools: 15 minutes cross town

Public Schools Reputation: The downtown area is in Lisgar's district, so high-school aged children would have a better public school available.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The National Arts Centre is in this area, as well as Parliament Hill, several museums, Ottawa University, and parks.

Comments: Downtown Ottawa is not New York, Paris or London; it's a little quiet and sterile ("They roll up the sidewalks..." and all that) but it is convenient to the Embassy and arts.

Lowertown / Bytown / The Market

Location: Lowertown is the part of Ottawa just east of Parliament Hill. It includes everything south of the Ottawa River lying between the Rideau Canal and the Rideau River. Rideau Street on the south is the boundary between Lowertown and Sandy Hill.

General Character: The Byward Market is the focal point of Lowertown, which has a lively night life, and countless shops, restaurants and boutiques. Established in 1826 with the construction of the Canal, much of "Bytown" has been renovated. Several luxury high-rises and new condo-type buildings mix freely with converted buildings and restored houses rub shoulders with missions for the homeless, and so on. For near ground level-living, it appeals most to singles and young couples who enjoy the bar scene and don't mind the influx of the many tourists during the summer. The high-rises attract many Mission people.

Commute to Embassy: 2 to 8 minute walk

Commute to private schools: 8 to 20 minute drive

Public Schools Reputation: The Lowertown area is in Lisgar's district, so high-school aged children would have a better public school available.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The Canal for skating in winter, or walking along in summer; the Byward Market is one of Ottawa's jewels.

Comments: Lowertown is *very* socio-economically mixed. For example, The George is across the street from a homeless mission. It is a nice neighborhood, but requires exploring to find the microenvironment you want.

Older, Close-In Residential Neighborhoods

The Glebe

The Glebe and North Glebe are characterized by larger, brick homes built in the early 1900s -1940s. They are south of the downtown. New Edinburgh is older and attractive, but houses tend to be much smaller.

Location: *One mile* south of Parliament and the Embassy. The Glebe is the neighborhood just south of Centretown. It is bounded by the Queensway to the north, Bronson Street to the west, and the Rideau Canal curves around the east and south sides of the neighborhood.

General Character: The Glebe is characterized by large brick houses built in the first quarter of the century in a variety of styles and tree-lined streets. It is cut through by Bank Street, with interesting restaurants, shops and businesses all within walking distance. There are also smaller houses of the same period. Renovation is a big activity in this area. Areas closest to the Canal are generally the nicest with more renovated homes. It has a strong sense of identity, with an active, locally supported community center.

Rentals/prices: Better value than Rockcliffe; average availability

Commute to Embassy: 10 minute via bus; 30 minute walk; 15 minutes by bike along canal bike path.

Commute to private schools: 15-20 minute

Commute to Public schools: Average

Public Schools Reputation: *Glebe High school* so high-school aged children would have a better to mixed public school available.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The Canal for recreation, excellent dog parks, and Bank Street for shopping (See also description of Canal area.)

Ottawa South & Ottawa East & Rideau Gardens

Ottawa South and Ottawa East are just across the Rideau Canal from - and similar in character to -The Glebe, discussed above.

Location: 1 mile south of Parliament. Ottawa South is the small area between the Canal and the Rideau River; Carlton University is on the west side, with Bank Street running through the middle of the neighborhood. Ottawa East is also between the River and the Canal, but is the part to the east, extending to the Queensway.

General Character: Ottawa South has a mix of university student housing and some very nice homes, especially along the Canal. Ottawa East tends to be more solidly family/residential. Areas along the Canal are the most "prime" and often are referred to in ads as "Canal". Closer to the Canal home prices run higher, and un-renovated and further from Canal run less.

Commute to Embassy: Good bus service, 15 minutes; or a 10 minute drive by the Driveway (longer, along the Canal) or directly up Bank Street (congested.).

Public Schools: Hopewell School is an urban school, being rebuilt ('96) into a beautiful new facility with both French immersion and English programs to grade 8. Elgin Street School is a French immersion; Lady Evelyn is the well-liked alternative school with great facilities and with a good pre-school. Lisgar and Glebe High Schools serve the area, and both have good reputations, although the private schools also draw a lot of students from the area.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: Brewer Park, the Rideau River, the Canal, and the University.

Comments: Generally, the further from the Canal, the less desirable.

Sandy Hill

Location: Bounded by Rideau Street on the north, the Canal on the east, the Rideau River on the west and Mann on the south. Sandy Hill was, at one time, the prestige neighborhood and has many beautiful mansions, century old heritage houses, and luxury condo-type buildings near the Rideau River.

General Character: In 1867, Daly Avenue in Sandy Hill was Ottawa's most fashionable street; many of those beautiful old homes still exist.. The district is now home to many of the smaller diplomatic Missions in Canada. The University of Ottawa is situated in Sandy Hill, bringing a mix of ambassadorial families in grand residences, students in subdivided old worker's homes, professionals in chic new or renovated townhouses, and new immigrants in apartments.

Commute to Embassy: 20 minute walk or 10 minute drive. Buses are available.

Public Schools: Viscount Alexander (JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN-6) on Mann has a large ESL component. Children who qualify for a gifted program go to Muchmor (K-6) and Glashan (7-8); the area is served by well-regarded Lisgar High School.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: Near Rideau Canal; Strathcona Park on the Rideau River is attractive to cross-country skiers, birders and strollers with an imaginative playground, wading pool, picnic tables, and sports field and the open air Odyssey Theatre. Many homes are within walking distance to the Byward Market and downtown restaurants, museums & NAC.

Comments: This is city residential living at its best. Ideal for singles, couples.

New Edinburgh

Location: 1/2 mile east of Parliament Hill, between the Rideau River on the west and Rockcliffe on the east, with Sussex and the Ottawa River to the north. The small commercial district along Beechwood Road is the southern boundary.

General Character: Small and mid-size houses set close to the street - some dating to the late 1800s which are beloved by Ottawa, quite a few new, multiple unit buildings and condo-type developments. Lots of character. About 75% have been renovated to take advantage of every square inch of space. The neighborhood is small (5x10 blocks, approximately) and has several schools, churches, and antique/ boutique/specialty shops. A comparable neighborhood in Washington is Old Town Alexandria.

Commute to Embassy: Bus (20 minutes), walk (30 – 45 minutes), bike or drive (7 minutes)

Public Schools: Rockcliffe Park Elementary (JK – 6) & Lisgar High School serves the district.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: As described above, it fronts two rivers. Rideau Hall, the Governor General's official residence, is the focal point of the neighborhood and has a large park which is open to the public. It's proximity to local shops on Beechwood Ave make it attractive option. There are numerous parks surrounding the area.

Comments: Yards in New Edinburgh tend to be small. Covered parking does not always come with many houses and townhouses, and parking for visitors can be a problem on some streets due to parking restrictions.

If you like New Edinburgh, but if don't find anything there, you might also consider **Linden Lea and Manor Park**, as both border this area. The homes are similar to those in New Edinburgh, and like many older communities, many homes are being renovated.

Prestige Neighborhoods

As in many cities, things change over time. Since we're dealing with the here and now, these are currently the most prestigious neighborhoods in Ottawa: Rockcliffe Village, Island Park Drive, and some sections of The Glebe and Ottawa East that are along the Canal and hence usually differentiated in ads by names such as Canal or Dows Lake. You can certainly find perfectly impressive housing in other neighborhoods - such as Featherstone Drive in Alta Vista - and not all homes in these neighborhoods will knock your socks off by any stretch of the imagination, but by the neighborhood name, people would assume you were pretty comfy. See also: New Edinburgh, especially the northernmost section.

Rockcliffe Village the premiere diplomatic residential neighborhood.

Location: 1 mile east of downtown on the Ottawa River

General Character: Rockcliffe Village was settled a country estate community in the early 1900s. New homes continue to be built on large lots with lots of big trees. Homes tend to be stately and/or large and charming with nice yards resulting in a pleasing atmosphere. There are no sidewalks to retain a "village" character, nor are there any stores or commercial buildings, but there are several schools. Rockcliffe is named for the rock-rimmed promontory it occupies, and is higher and hillier than much of the city. Rockcliffe is rimmed on the west and south by areas of high-end condo-type buildings and apartments. Families with children tend to rent detached houses, couples and singles often live in the nice apartment buildings, condos, and townhouses off Springfield Road, Rideau Crescent and Belvedere Crescent. "New Rockcliffe" refers to the eastern end of the village near Birch Street, the dividing line between Rockcliffe and Manor Park. This area has a distinct feel from the older part of the Village, with houses that tend to be newer. A large number of rentals are marketed to the diplomatic community.

Commute to Embassy: 6 minutes by car. Bus service is available, but limited. Depending upon the location of the home, it may involve a 5-15 minute walk to the bus stop. Convenient bus service exists on Maple/Birch Street for "New Rockcliffe" and some Manor Park areas.

Schools in the area: The public elementary school, Rockcliffe Elementary, is generally acceptable, but classes are large. Rockcliffe Park Elementary has both the English and French immersion programs (French immersion is vastly superior compared to the over-crowded and under-resourced English program, reinforcing a "second-class" status for English students which exists largely throughout the Ottawa-Carlton Public School District). The Catholic elementary, St. Brigid's, also has large classes. The area is served by Lisgar High School, which has a better reputation.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: Rockcliffe Park, surrounding the Village on the east, north and west is large and beautiful for strolling, skiing or sledding, and the river to the north for bicycling and boating. There's a community library and community center with various programs, public hockey rink in the winter, and lots of events in the schools. Residents of New Rockcliffe are closest to Manor Park Elementary School and its outdoor recreational areas.

Comments: Roads are not salted in the winter, but Rockcliffe gets the plows out early and often so driving is no more a problem than anywhere else. It may be a little harder to make friends with your Canadian neighbors in Rockcliffe, in part due to the more "toney" atmosphere, and in part due to the high percentage of transient diplomats wearing out the natives' welcome mats. The short and rather painless commute to the Embassy and downtown, and the strong family atmosphere make the Village an idea locale for families, if one can find affordable housing.

Island Park Drive

There is a fairly narrow strip of executive-type housing along Island Park Drive, including many official residences and a few Embassies. Houses are beautiful and impressive, and often more affordable than in Rockcliffe.

Location: 1 1/2 miles west of Parliament, along Island Park Drive north of the Queensway to the Ottawa River.

General Character: Large, spacious houses on huge lots facing the Island Park Drive parkway, and neighboring streets.

Rentals/prices: Houses only; less expensive than Rockcliffe but houses are fairly large and nice and priced accordingly.

Commute to Embassy: 10 minutes on the Parkway - very pleasant.

Public Schools: See Highland Park in next section.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The river front is one long park - very pretty.

Comments: Traffic is a bit heavy on Island Park Drive and there may be a lot of construction in years to come as they widen the bridge to Quebec, and later perhaps Island Park Drive itself -over the loud complaints of property owners.

The Canal / Dows Lake

Location: Those areas of The Glebe and Ottawa East that front on the Canal and Dow's Lake, part of the canal system. Echo Drive and Queen Elizabeth Drive are the most prestigious/expensive areas. Another part is referred to by real estate types as Rideau Gardens.

General Character: Older homes mixed with luxury low-rise condominiums, townhouses, and apartment buildings, bordering on pleasant mature neighborhoods of large older homes and tree-lined streets. Streets generally follow a grid except right along the Canal. 10 Driveway is a popular apartment building.

Commute to Embassy: 5 to 10 minutes by car; good bus service.

Public Schools: Hopewell School is an urban school, being rebuilt ('96) into a beautiful new facility with both French immersion and English program to grade 8. Elgin Street School is French immersion; Lady Evelyn is the well-liked alternative school with great facilities and with a good pre-school. Glebe High School serves the area.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The Rideau Canal, Brewer Park, Brentwood Park, swimming & ice skating facilities, and many smaller parks, bike paths, etc..

Comments: Colonel By and the Driveway can have heavy traffic, and traffic is slowed by lots of sightseers, but as a rule, the further from the Canal, the less desirable the neighborhood.

Medium-Close Nice Residential Neighborhoods

In Washington, the corresponding neighborhoods would be parts of Chevy Chase, North Arlington, Silver Springs, Bethesda, Springfield, and so on. Ottawa is much smaller, so the pleasant nice-place-to-bring up-your-kids neighborhoods are much closer to the center of town. On average, all of these are within a 25 minute door-to-door commute. Each has a slightly different character, but most houses in each of the neighborhoods were built between 1950 and 1985.

Alta Vista

Location: 2 miles from downtown, southeast of the Ottawa River between the Bronson/Airport Pky/Hwy 16 on the west and the Queensway to the north; Walkley Road is the southern boundary.

General Character: Alta Vista is a large area of homes built in the 60s, 70s and 80s, with vastly different styles and sizes of homes. Homes here tend to be more horizontal than vertical, spacious, and have nice yards. Streets are wide and most homes have attached garages, if not double garages. The various sections are interspersed with parks, schools and churches. There are many high rise apartment buildings along the Rideau River between Bank Street and St. Laurent Blvd.

Commute to Embassy: 15-20 minute

Public Schools: Mission families aren't generally very satisfied, and find the elementary and middle school curriculums lag behind a typical American curriculum by a year or so. Class sizes are not too bad, but are approximately 30% ESL. High schools are St. Patrick's (Catholic) and Ridgemont (English.)

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: Nice safe neighborhood of well-kept homes, sidewalks, lots of parks.

Comments: Alta Vista is a great neighborhood to live in and is well-liked by families which chose it, but the public schools are less than satisfactory to many.

Rothwell Heights and Beacon Hill

Location: Along the Ottawa River, 4 miles east of downtown, just east of the small Rockcliffe airport. Beacon Hill is the next neighborhood east, actually in Gloucester rather than Ottawa

General Character: Rothwell Heights is a neighborhood of very nice, spacious, mostly custom-built homes constructed on fairly large lots in the 70s and 80s. Beacon Hill is also a mature neighborhood but has a more housing-development feel to it, with mostly two-story homes on good-sized lots and town homes. Home prices are more in Rothwell Heights and for particularly nice homes; less for smaller units.

Commute to Embassy: 20 minute by car

Public Schools: Colonel By is the high school and offers the Baccalaureate program, and is quite academically oriented.. Elementary and middle schools have high percentages of ESL students.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses. Good park areas, big yards. Isolated from the city but not too far out. There are good preschools and playgroups. The St. Laurent and Gloucester Recreation Centers offer swimming, ice skating, and nice community programs and have libraries attached to them. Good bus service.

Comments: Mission families love the neighborhood but find the elementary and middle public schools academically unchallenging.

Manor Park

Location: 2 miles east of downtown along the Ottawa River

General Character: A quiet family neighborhood of modest Cape-Cod and 40's-style box houses. It has since been gradually gentrified by professionals and civil servants. About 2/3 of the houses have been remodeled and expanded from the original 3-bedroom, 1 bath homes. Big trees, no sidewalks, no pretensions. Average availability. No apartments. The houses vary enormously in size and stylishness.

Commute to Embassy: 10 minute drive; good bus service.

Public Schools: Elementary school children go to Manor Park Elementary School (French immersion and English stream) which education-conscious local families seem moderately satisfied with. The Catholic elementary school is St. Brigid's in Rockcliffe. The local middle school is *generally not* deemed satisfactory by Americans or Canadians. Rideau High School (a largely technical school) is the high school, but is not considered satisfactory. Lisgar High (a good school) is available to children who have proven strong French.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: Borders the Ottawa River on the north, and has *several other* parks. The public school has a huge field with a community skating rink in the winter and community *recreation programs*. The neighborhood is very friendly and welcoming, with a good *percentage* of diplomatic families seeking a *regular-joe kind* of neighborhood.

Comments: You won't find representational type houses in Manor Park. The nice part is west of St. Laurent Blvd. and north of Hemlock. Manor Park is a great choice for those with no kids or with a private education allowance; it is *not* a good choice for families with older kids and no education allowance.

Highland Park in Ottawa West

Highland Park is a nice, older established neighborhood and includes the Island Park Drive area (discussed above) and the Civic Hospital area. Homes are spacious and date to the turn of the century. The area around Civic Hospital has large 1940s-era homes. Richmond Road has a lot of nice high-rises and those facing north would have spectacular views of the river and Gatineau hills. Britannia is also in this area.

Location: 5 km west of downtown, between the river and Carling Avenue.

General Character: Older, established neighborhood with tree-lined streets; large lots.

Curent Mission Population: 5%

Prices: Better value than many similar neighborhoods.

Commute to Embassy: 15 minutes

Public Schools: Broadview is the grammar school and Nepean High serves the area. Mission families with young children are satisfied. The schools seem more homogenous than some areas, for better or worse. Several families have children in the Jewish school and also like it.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: Ottawa's active Jewish community, many synagogues, and Jewish school (Hillel) are also in the area.

Comments: The neighborhoods east of Parkdale are not as nice.

Hunt Club

Location: 5 miles south downtown, just northeast of the airport, and bordering on the Greenbelt, with lots of park land. Close to Alta Vista.

General Character: A rapidly growing area of planned housing developments with a variety of home types, but characterized by fairly narrow attached 2-story + basement homes with double garages on maze-like streets. *Most homes have* 2 to 4 or more bedrooms; good value for spacious, nearly-new living space, but they are farther out. Similar to typical new suburban developments in the U.S.

Commute to Embassy: 30 minutes

Public Schools: the elementary schools are St. Thomas Moore (Catholic) and Robert Bateman and Roberta Bondar (both public with excellent new facilities.) The high school is Hillcrest. Families with young children or children just starting school are happy.

Comments: Hunt Club tends to attract young families/first time home buyers who are looking for good value.

Aylmer, Quebec

Location: Across the Ottawa River (Champlain Bridge), nestled between the River and Gatineau Provincial Park

General Character: Traditionally English speaking. Lots of space and trees, marina, parks, beach and bike path. Close to Gatineau Park.

Commute to Embassy: Easy commute via bus (30 - 40 minutes, or 15 – 20 by car).

Public Schools: It can be almost impossible to get your children into English-language schools, but if you succeed (*not* to be assumed!) they seem equivalent to Ottawa schools.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The proximity to the Gatineau Park is worth any amount of hassle for nature and sports enthusiasts, new public swimming pool (2006) and plenty of golf courses. Great summer camps.

Comments: You'll be living in *Quebec*, where your Ontario tax exemption card is not accepted; you can't get a refund on 8% Quebec provincial sales tax, which will also appear on all of your heating and household utilities bills. There is no tax on food items; when making large purchases, however, it is worth it to cross over to Ontario. You will probably have a problem getting your children into English-language schools, if you opt for public education, but this has been successfully overcome with perseverance.

Hull, Quebec

Location: Just across the Ottawa River from Parliament Hill.

General Character: Very mixed.

Prices: Rents are considerably lower than in comparable housing in Ottawa. Personnel generally choose Hull due to the short commute and affordable luxury apartments with wonderful views.

Commute to Embassy: Depending on transportation, 10 to 20 minutes.

Public Schools: It can be almost impossible to get your children into English-language schools, but if you succeed (not to be assumed!) they seem equivalent to Ottawa schools.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The views looking south towards Parliament and the city are wonderful.

Comments: You'll be living in Quebec, where your Ontario tax exemption card is not accepted; you can't get a refund on 8% Quebec provincial sales tax, which will also appear on all of your heating and household utilities bills. You will probably have a problem getting your children into English-language schools, if you opt for public education, but this has been successfully overcome with perseverance.

The New Communities

As in most cities pleasant, newly -planned communities are more or less constantly being added to the outer edge of Ottawa. These outer communities were planned to be separated from the core by a semicircular "greenbelt" of parkland which is at least a mile wide and five to seven miles from downtown. Lying mostly outside this greenbelt are, from east to west around the circle, the cities of Gloucester, Nepean, Barrhaven and Kanata. These 'burbs' tend to attract families with children, offer more space at less cost, and be fairly new. The public schools tend to be likewise more uniformly acceptable. The downside is you'll have the longest commute.

Gloucester

Location: Gloucester includes the area lying east and south of Ottawa, between the Ottawa River and the Rideau River and including the communities of **Orleans** (Gloucester's fastest growing community), **Blackburn Hamlet**, and **Beacon Hill** (see **Rothwell Heights**, above), as well as more isolated outlying enclaves.

General Character: Varies considerably, from 70'sish subdivisions with very nice homes (Blackburn Hamlet) to 80's-90s bedroom communities nestled around much older farm-community cores (Orleans) to working farms.

Commute to Embassy: 30 minutes minimum

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: Place d'Orleans Shopping Centre and *the Gloucester Center* mall nicely complement the miles of maintained nature trails in the Met Bleu Conservation Area and the Pine Grove Forest Reserve.

Nepean/Barrhaven

Location: Nepean was a separate city before the consolidation of Ottawa in 2001, located on the west side of the city. Thus, Nepean has a performing arts theatre, a library, substantial sports complex, etc. Now part of Ottawa, it includes Centrepont, Craig Henry, City View, Carleton Heights, Fisher Heights, and Rideau View neighborhoods. Much of Nepean is like the Washington suburbs, e.g., Arlington or McLean. While there are apartment buildings, this is an area that attracts families with dogs and children.

Immediately south of Nepean is **Barrhaven**; to the west are **Bell's Corners and Stittsville**. Barrhaven is developing into a suburban "town" with all the amenities and shopping centers associated with suburban sprawl. Shirley's Bay and Crystal Bay are nice neighborhoods on the Ottawa River. Barrhaven is a 90s-era development of large homes on small lots, again, very similar to U.S. suburban developments. Cedarhill Estates and Orchard Estates offer large new homes on one to three acre lots. Along the river are country homes and condo-type developments.

Commute to Embassy: The easternmost neighborhoods would require only about a 20 minute commute, but Barrhaven would require at least 35-40 minutes due to traffic tie-ups on the Queensway (417).

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The outlying areas have the sense of being islands in the countryside. They're further from the Gatineau and Ottawa River bicycle paths and the Canal, but close to many conservation / greenbelt areas. Bayshore Shopping Centre provides convenient access to department stores and specialty shops.

ORLEANS

Location: Orleans is a large community to the east of Ottawa. It was incorporated into the city of Ottawa a few years ago. This venue has a lot to offer in housing in shopping. It has been developing rapidly and there are many new neighborhoods under construction. Orleans has the advantages of city living but country living.

Parks, Amenities and Pluses: There are many great opportunities for fitness and children's activities. There are several Recreation Centers offering fitness programs, skating, swimming, hockey, spring and summer camps, etc. Along with the growth of communities, there are many new shops and restaurants including Wal-Mart, Michaels, clothing and shoe stores, and the local Bulk Barn. Orleans is a very "kid friendly" community with many Embassy families taking up residence there. **Commute to Embassy:** Approximately 25 – 30 minutes east of Ottawa. Traffic on the Queensway (417) tends to be very slow during rush hour, so many employees take the Rockcliffe Parkway to the Embassy; this route may be longer in distance, but it is scenic and moves along.

Kanata

Location: With traffic at moderate speed, a 20-minute drive to the Embassy via the Queensway (Exit Nicholas street).

General Character: Kanata is a planned city with numerous elementary and three high schools, and a variety of recreational facilities including Scotia Bank Place, a covered stadium built in 1996. There is also the Kanata Centrum Signature Center, Kanata Wave Pool, 15 community centers and 4 libraries. Like Orleans, this is a growing community, with new developments popping up all around. Along with the residential growth the area is enjoying considerable commercial growth (shopping centers, restaurants).

Commute to Embassy: 20 -30 minutes.

Parks, Amenities and Pluses: This area is identical to any suburban planned community "town" in the U.S.; with new houses, strip mall type shopping centers and general suburban sprawl. One will also find the Indoor Kids play center, movie theaters, Wal-Mart, COSTCO, Home Depot, multiple golf courses and driving ranges, indoor soccer arena (kids and adults leagues), 4 water parks, gymnastic and dance studios, etc.

Outlying Villages

For those who want the feeling of living in the country, Manotick, Osgoode, Greely, Stittsville and other villages which, while within commuting distance to Ottawa, maintain a rural village atmosphere. Manotick, in particular, attracts U.S. Mission families and is discussed below in more detail. Other villages share many of the same qualities. Being rural villages, each offers homes within the village itself as well as on working farms, and in small developments a mile or two from the village itself along the River.

Manotick and Osgoode

Location: 20 miles south of Ottawa on the Rideau River and Rideau Canal

General Character: A mill dating to 1869 and village core with turn-of-the-century shops and heritage homes. The majority of the village was built between 1900 and 1950. Construction of newer homes and shopping centers began in the 80s as the village experienced a sort of renaissance as an artists and upscale retirement community. New construction continues at this time. Much lower home prices than in Ottawa, especially for larger, new homes on substantial lots.

Commute to Embassy: 35-45 minutes from Manotick.

Public Schools: Schools tend to be smaller, with smaller class sizes and more parent involvement and individual attention, but have a distinctly rural and agriculturally-oriented outlook.

Parks, Amenities, and Pluses: The Rideau River is wonderful for boating and fishing with affordable moorage readily available. Community life tends to focus on active local sports and related activities. Manotick is also home to the well-known "Manotick Fringe Festival" each summer which showcases new regional performing artists. The area is also home to many regional artists who open their studios for popular organized studio tours once a year.

House Shopping: REALTORS & WEBSITES

Canada is a Living Quarters Allowance (LQA) post. You have the option to rent a home or purchase a home during your tour in Canada; the decision is yours to make. If you choose to buy a home, there are a few items you need to keep in mind. Under the LQA program you will be able to claim 10% of the purchase price as your annual living quarters allowance up to your maximum allowance. Because our right to reside in Canada is tied to our diplomatic status and not to Canadian citizenship, lenders will require a 25% down payment. If you or your spouse has Canadian citizenship, you might qualify for a loan with as little as 5-10% down, similar to that which is often asked in the United States. Every year there are families who have bought homes and have been generally satisfied with their decision. Remember, though, if you receive LQA you cannot deduct your mortgage interest on your U.S. income taxes and you will be subject to Ontario/Ottawa real estate taxes. These notes are not meant to discourage you from pursuing a home purchase option; but rather to make you aware of important criteria that should be weighed in making a decision to buy or to rent.

WEBSITES

The Websites listed here are excellent to browse and acquaint yourself with all you need to know about “house shopping” in Ottawa, and the landlord/tenant laws and procedures in effect throughout Canada:

www.cmhc.ca This is the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation website and a good website for buying or renting in all locations across Canada. Best info on differing provisions in leases among the provinces, good discussion of landlord/tenant laws and procedures, etc.

<http://orebweb1.oreb.ca/index.shtml> This is the “official source of all MLS listings in Ottawa. It is very complete and you can select via neighborhood, type of home, etc.

www.ottawarealestate.org Homes of all types for sale or rent in the greater Ottawa area.

www.homesclick.ca This is the Ottawa Citizen’s (the local newspaper) real estate section. It features homes of all types for sale or rent in the greater Ottawa area. The Citizen offers an expanded real estate section each Saturday.

www.house-rent.com Homes offered for rent in the greater Ottawa area.

www.invis.ca If you decide to buy a home, pre-qualifying for a mortgage is a good idea. This mortgage broker is not affiliated with any specific lender.

The realtors listed below have been recommended to the CLO Office by a variety of Mission personnel. You are under **no obligation** to use any specific realtor when looking for your house or apartment. In fact, it is not unusual for someone to use several realtors. Additionally, you may wish to “drive around” the area(s) you like and look for private listings as well as using the Internet to find the property that will best meet your individual needs. A complete listing of Ottawa realtors may be found at www.oreb.ca If you have been pleased or displeased with the services of the realtor you select, please let us know.

<p>Dionne Caldwell Caldwell and Associates Realty 9 Murray Street Ottawa, ON T: (613) 744-5525 E: dcaldwell@caldwell-realty.ca</p>	<p>Pawel Watras Royal LePage 200-1335 Carling Avenue Ottawa, ON K1Z 8N8 T: (613) 725-1171 F: (613) 725-3323 E: watras@rogers.com</p>
<p>John Castellan Royal LePAGE 201-1500 Bank Street Ottawa, ON K1H 7Z2 Tel: (613) 733-9100 F: (613) 733-1450 Toll Free: 1-877-837-8885 E: jcastellan@royalpage.ca</p>	<p>Contact: Sharon Mykytyshyn (Mic-a-tish-an) Royal LePAGE Real Estate 591 March Road Kanata, ON K2K 2M5 T: (613) 270-8200 F: (613) 270-0463 E: smykytyshyn@royalpage.ca</p>
<p>Kevin Saunders Coldwell Banker (613) 728-2664 Kevin-saunders@coldwellbanker.ca Or Kevin@kevinsaunders.ca</p>	<p>Jim Nesbitt Nesbitt Property Management T: (613) 744-8719 E: nesbitt@rogers.com Website : www.nesbittproperty.com</p>
<p>Eric Burgin Re/Max 129 Riocan Avenue Ottawa, ON K2J 5G3 T : (613) 216 1755 Fax : 613-825-0878 E : ericburgin@remax.net www.ericburgin.com</p>	<p>Gary Broughton Keller Williams Solid Rock Realty 1 Antares Dr., Suite 110 Ottawa, ON K2E 8C4 E: gvbroughton@kw.com (613) 730-3800</p>
<p>James K. Winder Gatekeeper Property Management 1340 Caserta Place Orleans, ON K4A 3C1 T: (613) 830-4225 F: (613) 830-4410 E: gatekeeperpm@rogers.com</p>	<p>Rolf Baumann RGB Consultants (613) 265-2700 FAX : (613) 234-9411 E : rolfbaumann@rogers.com www.rgb-group.com</p>
<p>Cindy Sezlik PRUDENTIAL TOWN CENTRE REALTY Suite 114 Landry Street Ottawa, Ontario K1L 8K4 T: (613) 744-6697 E: cindy@csgohomes.com</p>	<p>Anna Turner – Specializes in Rockcliffe Park Area RE/MAX Metro City Realty Ltd. 1740 Montreal Road Ottawa, ON K1J 6N3 (613)748-1223 Email: anna@annaturner.ca Website: www.annaturner.ca</p>
<p>Dave Nesbit Nesbit Property Management Inc. 99 Fifth Ave. Suite 240 Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5P5 T: (613)744-8719 E: mailto:nesbitt@rogers.com Website: www.nesbittproperty.com/</p>	<p><u>MORTGAGE BROKER</u> Robert Stanfield Mortgage Agent  CANADA'S MORTGAGE EXPERTS 613-435-0515 (phone) 613-219-3085 (cell) 613-435-2235 (fax) robstanfield@ottawamortgagespecialist.com www.ottawamortgagespecialist.com Agent license # M08009050 Broker license # 10801</p>

